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A MAGAZINE FOR FREE CHRISTIANS

OUR CHURCHES OVERSEAS

1. Cape Town, by Magnus Ratter

Three diverse social traditions form modern South Africa: the Negro, the Afrikaans, the English, in uneasy togetherness.

Worthy as has been the English gift slowly the Westminster tradition dies: defeated in the maternity ward by the Afrikaner, a staunch Calvinist with all the strength, the courtesy this implies. Thus it comes that the Negro wins out by numbers, differing so profoundly from the White that bridges are few, now mostly broken. Though the black boy has been late for breakfast, he is likely to demand, and get, his share of lunch.

In this young country, with no liberal tradition as went to America, there is one Unitarian Church, small, yet alive; alone but not lonely. It has done a good job in the influence way.

A century ago, D. P. Faure prepared for the Calvinist ministry: went to Holland, but there absorbed the liberal enlightenment. Returning home, branded he was booted out by the black coats of his own church who hotly believed most men were doomed to the everlasting bonfire.

Ostracised because he taught God, Jesus, Bible, were expressions of a divine love he founded his own church in an insurance building: but hellfire with damnation cinders would rule South Africa for another fifty years.

To his church there gathered a tiny group of thoughtful, influential citizens, of middle rank: no socialites, few working class. As

was inevitable soon they were mostly of the English group. Calvinism has its own social kindness but liberal religion—as we know it—is not possible. No Robert Burns has moderated this Calvinism. Thus, founded by an Afrikaner, our church became, always remaining, an English Unitarian Church.

From 1870—1900 this tiny group held important witness, for D. P. Faure achieved wide publicity, was a figure of startling controversy when God, Jesus, The Bible, were headline news. Yet he remained a local influence, never became a national leader.

For forty years the Rev. Ramsden Balmforth, with a gifted pen, an outlook one with Wicksteed, G.B.S. and the I.L.P., this energetic R.V. Holt of a man, gave the church its present life.

In modern South Africa there is much non-church liberal religion, of the Hamblin mind, following the American lecture pattern. Calvinist, Anglican, Roman, Methodist churches are as average as in Inverness or Edinburgh.

Our Unitarian Church now consists of two groups: those born into the church, those who have found it for themselves. One third of its spending is from endowments, two thirds from living devotion. Its fabric, church only, is rather poor, ill adapted to modern usage, but is scrupulously cared for. Its personnel is as devout, as varied, as loyal, as those in Cross Street or Essex Church. A downtown fabric it has not been, for twenty years, a family church serving the near neighbourhood.

If Religion is a bad man trying to become a good man, a good man trying to improve himself, with such agencies as help that worthy purpose: if Churchianity is politics fossilised, places wherein men make peace with racial memory and personal hope, if this be so, our church can, with modest confidence, await its second century of life and work.

In a city of four languages, wide dispersal, acute colour awareness in four colour groups, the Cape Town Unitarian Church has a challenge that has to be experienced to be known. If, possible, South Africa follows the social evolution of America there might emerge a strong Unitarian Fellowship Movement, this the Mother Church. We may not know this, can but live by faith. Meantime, rigidly excluded from the wireless, our church is widely known, much respected.

Fifty-four hundred calendars go out in a year, twenty-one hundred carrying personal messages under closed stamp. The inkwell is an important instrument of church equipment. The youth life of the church is weak, Sunday School small. Yet, on occasion, the tin building bursts its walls with young and old to show that figures on a chart do not reveal the life of the soul: churches live by heart throbs.

South Africa is subject to so much kettle criticism one cannot avoid brief reference to its dagger politics. Alas, there is so much unjust suffering on this round earth may not the one-legged criticism of South Africa be one-eyed idealism. South Africa cannot be the worst of sinners.

The live together of Brown White, Yellow, Black, is a vast issue, an earnest challenge. Though important, a vote is not the only mark of a good state. It must not be thought that white men become bad men when they live in Africa though it probably exacts its price.

If one can compress a cyclone into a matchbox one can but say that soon as the Negro is ready he will take over Africa, North as well as South: if, when this comes so, the little man will benefit remains to be proven. It would seem as if Wisdom would say: be not overquick of criticism of the faraway: let all citizens in all lands perfect themselves, perfect their social practices for, by reason of an inner law, the perfect shames the imperfect.

' COMETH :VERYWHERE"

By Bruce Findlow

n these days of religious apathy se who still worship in churches t sometimes feel that they are g something peculiar, some- g cut off from the main stream ife. Certainly it seems like that he cynical or unbelieving or in- erent who watch us going to and between home and church.

'e need to remind ourselves n that our religion has to do with world and not with some special ner of this world but with the ole of it. Concern for nuclear rmament is not the whole of gion, Sunday worship is not the ole of religion, feeling the beauty nature is not the whole of gion. The whole of life—good ill, safe and dangerous, noisy quiet—is the province of gion. When we say that religion "way of life" surely we mean that it is the art of negotiating ie narrow and particular path rather the art of marching with ers down the broad path of nanity with courage and insight l love—with the qualities which p us to love life, to enjoy it and contribute to its abundance.

When our Sunday worship seems er and separate and cut off from life of the many it may help to nember that someone has said Vorship is the celebration of life." may help to know of that church Chicago where some of us wor- pped in the summer of 1958 ere, on the way in, you see above door "Up from the world of the ny to the over-world of the One" d where, on the way out you read ack to the world of the many to fil the life of the One." Best of perhaps is Emerson's thought: *There is no great and no small To the soul that maketh all: And where it cometh, all things are; And it cometh everywhere."*

UNITARIANS IN THE NEWS

Among the first honorary degrees to be conferred by the new Chancellor of Sheffield University, the Rt. Hon. R. A. Butler, was one to the Rt. Hon. J. Chuter Ede, a recent President of the General Assembly

A headline across six columns and more than eighteen inches of type were given to the Rev. George Parkinson, Scarborough and Whitby, by an April "Daily Express." "Rebel parson George Parkinson wants brides to do without their fathers' moral support for that walk down the aisle," it said. The article reported Mr. Parkinson as saying "I am something of a rebel even in my own Church which is essentially liberal and modern in outlook."

Not long ago, after a visit to a service at Newcastle (Minister the Rev. John Storer) a "News Chronicle" reporter wrote a very good article upon the service and Unitarianism.

CHILDREN'S CORNER

DE MORTUIS

Father raised his eyebrows in amazement.

"*What* did you say?" he asked; and Raymond repeated his considered opinion.

"I said I thought the picture was dead belting, dad."

"Dead belting?"

"Yes, dad."

"I've heard of 'dead smashing,' but this is a new one."

"Oh, no, dad," said Raymond, "it's been around for some time."

"Well, let's say that it has just made its impact on me. Anyway, this use of the word 'dead' seems to be popular these days. A bit morbid, isn't it"

"Oh, no, dad, it's not 'dead' in the sense of being moribund," replied Raymond, who says some surprising things at times, "it's a

matter of emphasis."

"You *do* surprise me. Emphasis—I see."

"You might say, for instance," went on Raymond, "that something was dead interesting."

"Like this conversation?"

"Er—yes dad. Yes, well, that would sort of mean 'very' or 'really' interesting."

"That's extremely clear. I thought you meant that something was very dead or really dead."

"Dad, d'you mean to say you don't catch on?"

"Wait a minute, Raymond, I didn't say that; but what *you* say is that for some of you these days the word 'dead' just means 'very,' 'really' or something similar?"

"In a sense, dad."

"It can't see any sense; it seems pointless to me."

"You know, dad," said Raymond. "Sometimes I don't think you're in the same neighbourhood as me."

Two days later, dad returned from work with a triumphant gleam in his eye.

"Words with you, my lad," he said. "One of the boys at work said to-day that some girl was 'dead beautiful.' Now, I defy even you to sort *that* one out and make sense of it. What an expression!"

A sad look came into Raymond's eyes.

"Dad," he said solemnly, "I'm afraid you're a square. You're just not with it. 'Dead beautiful' means she was 'dead smashing,' that's all!"

It was at this point that father, with a cry of despair, gave up the struggle.

BROADCAST

The morning service in Welsh: Sunday, June 19th, from 11 o'clock to twelve noon, from Capel y Bryn Unitarian Church, Cwrtnewydd, Llanybythen, Carms., conducted by the minister, the Rev. D. Jacob Davies.

A FAITH FROM ELSEWHERE

"A Stone of Stumbling," "Thi Abominable Thing": these are titl given to letters to the "Non Subscribing Presbyterian" abou the Chalice and Flame symbol. Th satirical guns of the Rev. A. I Agnew are turned strongly agains its appearance on the new Centra Hall beside Belfast's First Presby terian Church. Mr. Agnew say "The symbol of a Faith from els where is fixed triumphantly in soli stone on the building which ever one regards as the headquarters o the once-independent Non-subscri ing Church."

RECOMMENDED

The 1960 Essex Hall Lecture b the Rev. S. P. Whitehouse, M.A B.Litt., called "Towards a Ne Theology" (Lindsey Press, 2s.). M Whitehouse seeks to show the erro of certain systems of theology, wh and how they must be replace but most of the lecture is co cerned with the errors of certai substitutes for theology — notab humanism and logical positivis or empiricism. The essay co cludes with a plea for innat ideas and experience ar argues for the existence of G from the design of the worl Humanists, empiricists and so for will perhaps consider the lectu rather naive, but it is a balanc and thoughtful presentation of t Platonic point of view.

U.Y.P.L.

Mr. Alan Curren, President U.Y.P.L. 1959-60 has becon Assistant Secretary to the Secreta of the Northern Sunday Scho Federation. The position is "training post" for the Secretar ship when the Rev. Sydney Knig resigns in 1961.

Of the eleven students now trai ing for the ministry in U.C.M. ni came into College via the U.Y.P.L

" ASSEMBLY MEETIN'S, 1960

Bi T'TYKE

Eve fahnd aht that when tha's ed t'fust bite o' t'apple things ahr ver t'just saame at afterwards. Bi saame token Ah reckkon ez hah staff at t'Essex Hall 'ull bi reight ad they've getten thru' t'fust ssembly Meetin's to bi held i' t'new emises baht ony accidents . . . o'b t'place is bahnd to echo wi' are Unitarian accents for mony a ay to coam. Hahiver it's ower geean for anither yeear an' hativer else fowk might grummell baht, at leeast t'weather wor eight.

Wi' staarted, as ewsual, wi' Sunda Skooil gatherin'. Noab'di od say ez hah it wor a reight vela meetin'. One chap tawked baht, "enthusiasm," wi' his voice his booits . . . an' soam posters i' S.O.S. painted on 'em turned aht meean "Save Our Schools." Thowt aroase i' mi mind 'at ley'd hev bin mooar to t'point if ley'd hev ment "Satisfied? or orry?" Hahiver we'd a gooid wk thru t'new President, Maister Alex Rogers. What he hed to say wor full o' gradely wisdom an' hooamly sense.

We hed to mak a dash then, ower to t'Essex Church for t'reception an' a bite o' summat to eit. T'Place wor crahded ez it varry oft is for theease do's; t'ony cappin' thing is hah soa mony fowk manage to tawk an' eit at t'saame tahme. T'Noise wor that gurt that them ez wor interested hed noa ideea that t'Peace Meetin' hed begun i' anither rooam. Ah doan't knaw if there wor ony significance i' t'incident, soa ah mod ez weel leeave it to thee to mak up thi own mind.

They'd getten, Dr. Dana Greeley, a parson thru' America to come ower to preeach t'Anniversary Sarmon an' bi gum 'e could tawk; Ah've heeard women keeap things going buti 'e licked t'lot . . . t'ony difference, of cooarse, wor that 'e hed summat to say. He telled us abaht what 'e ca'ed "Religion for t'New Age," an' gav us soam ideea o' what it wod include.

Whilst t'sarmon wor bein' preeached i' t'chappil, dahnstairs i' skooilroom t'young fowk o' Essex Church wor makkin' reeady for

t'supper. It wor summat they'd arranged i' aid o' t'Refugee Yeear Appeal Fund. Ah dooan't knaw ahr mich brass they addled ower t'job, but t'ideea wor nowt but a stroak o' genius. Soup an' sosige-rells a t'top o' a gooid sarmon ez bin calculated to mak ony delegate goa hooam wi' t'ideea that 'e'd niver hed it soa gooid.

To be continued

"The offertory isn't really smaller; it's just that the new pound notes make it look less.

NEWS AND VIEWS

OVERSEAS CHURCHES

From the AUCKLAND, New Zealand, calendar: "When Dr. Linus Pauling, Nobel Prize winner and one of the world's truly great creative scientists and peace advocates lectured in Auckland recently, he was interviewed by reporters from the "Rationalist," local journal of the Rationalist Association. When asked his opinion of the future of religion he replied that if there *were* a religion in the future it would have to be "*something like Unitarianism.*" The "Rationalist" however, did not print this part of the interview but we are indebted to one of their reporters for it."

The following is an extract from a letter by an English Unitarian now resident in Canada:

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Towards a New Theology

by **S. P. WHITEHOUSE, M.A., B.Litt.**

Essex Hall Lecture, 1960

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The Lindsey Press,
Essex Hall,
1/6, Essex Street, Strand,
London W.C.2.

"The brand of Unitarianism to be found in the L——— Fellowship is just about as irreligious as any religion could be. The accent is very strongly on humanism. The meetings on Sunday evenings are from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. They begin with a reading and introductory remarks by the minister, followed by a hymn or reading with responses. There is a brief period of music (tape recorded) and then the address and an hour of discussion during which coffee is served. The level of discussion is very high. I sit there feeling like a little moron and try to learn something from the eleven people

ut me, many of whom are urers at Western University. thing which, for me, makes the up particularly interesting is the al mixture. It's like a Unitarian ernational Club. Unitarianism ms to appeal to the foreign intelli- tsia rather than to honest to dness Canadians . . . "

P.S.: I like the L—— O—— nd of Unitarianism! "

HOME CHURCHES

unday, April 24th, was the 260th niversary at IPSWICH. The Mayor Ipswich and members of the rough Council attended the cial service.

The Advance Committee at DWERY FIELD, Hyde, is preparing film strip about the Church and hool. A new Church magazine is o being published by the Com- ttee. It will consist of sixteen plicated pages and will be in lition to the printed monthly lendar.

After 31 years' service Miss Pyllis mphry is shortly to retire as cretary of PLATT CHAPEL, Man- ester.

The World Refugee Fund bene- ed by £200 from the presenta- n in London of "By the Waters Babylon," by the Lewin's Mead heatre Club. The Club has now en invited to perform the play in rmingham.

The Rev. Frank Walker, B.A., inister of HALIFAX and HUDDERS- LD, has been elected Chairman of e recently formed Huddersfield ternational Group.

The North Eastern Region of the Y.P.L. conferred at NEWCASTLE in ril. The themes of the meetings re "Religious Worship" and Growing up the modern world." ULLET ROAD, Liverpool, has raised 45 15s. for the Pestalozzi ildren's Village Trust—a specific fort as part of W.R.Y.

After 27 years in the office, the v. T. W. Roberts has resigned as onorary Treasurer of the Man- chester Domestic Mission. The new Treasurer is Mr. Albert Forrester, A.C.A., Warden and Honorary Treasurer of PLATT CHAPEL. Income over the past year was £871 (excluding a large bequest and a gift of £250 from Mr. J. S. Harding). £487 came from dividends, interest and income by refunds, £116 from other churches, subscriptions and grants, £100 from WILLERT STREET and £65 from the RENSHAW STREET congregation

The proceeds from one of the presentations of "Champagne for Breakfast" by DOB LANE Dramatic Society was given to the Cripples' Aid Society.

The Northern Sunday School Federation Good Friday meetings were held at GREAT HUCKLOW. A large congregation was conducted in worship by the Rev. J. Keir Murren at a service held in the Little Theatre. The Annual Report showed a deficit of £500 on the Holiday Homes—a lower deficit than for some time. At the Annual Meeting Mr. J. T. Jones, President of the Men's League, presented the second half of a gift of £100 to the

Northern S.S. Federation

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Federation for the new children's building. The new President of the Federation is the Rev. F. Ryde, of BURY, Bank Street.

SWINTON "Aprilites" raised £11 for the Church Renovation Fund by means of a car rally to Great Hucklow. Local garages donated prizes. The preacher at the Refugee Year Service in May was Mrs. Lisa Goertz, author of "I stepped into Freedom."

Members of NEWCHURCH were deeply moved by the presentation of an Easter play "A Voice Within" written by their Secretary, Mr. R. W. Williamson.

In the last week of April, EDINBURGH'S Women's League entertained overseas students on Thursday, the Friday Club promoted an evening walk on Friday, the Y.P.L. entertained blind people on Saturday, and G.A. delegates made their reports at an evening meeting on Sunday.

Miss Elsie Coop described her recent visit to Oberammergau at AINSWORTH Women's League meeting in April.

Special May morning carols and Morris dancing were part of the May Day celebrations at IPSWICH.

Sunday School Anniversary Services at DUKINFIELD were conducted by G.A. Secretary, the Rev. John Kietly. Other services in May continued the series dealing with aspects of the Unitarian Faith.

The morning service at LEEDS, Mill Hill, was conducted by the Rev. A. L. Finbow and attended by members of the Vegetarian Society of Great Britain. Mill Hill World Refugee Year effort has raised £260 so far. The target is £300.

Speakers at the U.C.M. Ministers' Summer School, held on Mondays in May, were the Rev. A. B. Downing, the Rev. A. J. Long, and Mr. Harold Varley.

After 22 years service as Treasurer of BLACKLEY, Mr. F. H. Wilkinson has resigned. For seven years he has also been Chairman of the Church Committee.

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